Authority for establishment of coal based thermal 2×210 MW (420 MW) power station at Chittorgarh for which various inputs have to be tied up. A Australian firm has evinced interest in implementing the lignite based power project of 2×120 MW (240 MW) capacity in the joint / private sector, to be set up in Barsingsar in Rajasthan.

Setting up of Super Thermal Power plants in collaboration with American companies

*18. SHRI JAGADISH JANI: Will the Minister of POWER AND NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have a proposal to set up some super thermal power plants in the country in collaboration with some American companies;

(b) whether one such super thermal power plant is proposed to be set up at Ib valley in Sambalpur district, Orissa;

(c) whether it is also a fact that an agreement has been signed with the concerned U.S. company; and

(d) if so, by when the plant is going to be set up and what is the estimated cost thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF POWER AND NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES (SHRI KALP NATH RAI): (a) to (d) Yes, Sir. M / s Southern Electric International, Inc., a U.S. based company have signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Government of Orissa on 13th Dec., 1991 to set up coal based thermal power stations in Ib Valley of a total capacity of 2340 MW.

As per the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), the Company is to carry out technical and financial studies for establishing feasibility of the project by 30th March, 1992. The cost estimate of the project is expected to be available on completion of such studies.

Import of Raisins from Turkey

*19. SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be please to state:

(a) whether the State Trading Corporation imported 20 tons of raisins during the year 1991 from Turkey which were found unfit for human consumption;

(b) whether these were re-shipped to Turkey;

(c) if so, whether any enquiry has been ordered into import of such sub-standard stuff;

(d) if so, what is the outcome thereof; and

(e) if not, what are the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) The STC did not import any raisins from Turkey during 1991.

(b) to (e) Do not arise.

Trade Deficit in Terms of Dollar

*20. SHRI SARADA MOHANTY : SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the external trade deficit has come down by 50 per cent in terms of U.S. dollar;

(b) what is the deficit reduction in rupee terms;

(c) whether it is also a fact that higher import cost has pushed up local prices and that the shrinkage in import has intensified recession; and

(d) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) According to the provisional figures, India's trade deficit declined by 66.3% from US$ 4832 million during April—Dec. 1990 to US$ 1628 million during April—December 1991.

(b) In Rupee terms, the trade deficit declined by 54.2% from Rs. 8535 crores during April—Dec. 1990 to Rs. 3906 crores during April—Dec. 1991.

(c) and (d) The high import cost in just one factor explaining the recent inflationary trends in the Indian economy. The other contributory factors are: (i) high budget deficit; (ii) supply and demand imbalances in some of the sensitive commodities; (iii) sharp increases in prices of petroleum products; (iv) increase in excise duties and (v) substantial increase in procurement and issue prices of essential food items.

The decline in industrial production is partially explained by massive import compression. But there are other factors such as bottlenecks in infrastructure and tight money policy.

Number of aircraft operating in India's National and International Airlines

1. SHRI TINDIVANAM G. VENKATARAMAN : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state :

(a) what is that total number of planes with India's National and International airlines at present;

(b) what is the number out of these that are to be replaced and if so, by when;

(c) what type of plane is found suitable for flights and whether any new orders are pending for new aircraft from other countries; and

(d) what norms are followed in purchasing aircraft for commercial purposes?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI MADHAV RAO SCINDIA) : (a) The total number of planes with Air India, Indian Airlines and Vayudoot, at present, are 22, 55 and 17 respectively.

(b) Vayudoot has no immediate plans of fleet renewal, Air-India and Indian Airlines have been advised to plan for a more modern and younger fleet. However, as yet there are no firm plans for replacement of existing aircraft.

(c) In accordance with pay load and range considerations, Indian Airlines require 100-seater, 150-seater and 300-seater aircraft for its operations while Air India requires 200-seater medium range, 300-seater long range and 400-seater long range aircraft for its operations.

Indian Airlines would receive 12 A 320 aircraft in 1993-94 and Air India 4 Boeing-747-400 in 1993-94.

(d) Various aircraft meeting commercial pay-load and range criteria of the concerned airline are subjected to techno-economic evaluation by expert committees followed by investment approval by competent authorities.

Foreign Investment in India's Tourism Sector

2. SHRI VIREN J. SHAH : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state :

(a) what steps Government have taken or propose to take to attract foreign investment in India's tourism sector with liberal fiscal incentives;

(b) whether Government have consulted the State Government in this regard and, if so, what has been their response and what facilities they have offered; and

(c) what is the response of foreign investors in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI MADHAV RAO SCINDIA): (a) The Hotels and Tourism related industry is now a high priority industry and automatic approvals are available for foreign investment and collaboration within specified parameters. Various other incentives are also given to attract investment in this sector.

(b) Yes, Sir. Most of the State Government have accorded industry status to tourism and are providing various incentives/concessions to tourism sector.

(c) The response is positive.

National Park at Taj Mahal

3. SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that a national park is sought to be established in the Taj Mahal area at Agra, extending to Fatehpur Sikri; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI MADHAV RAO SCINDIA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. In line with the Memorandum of Understanding signed on May 18, 1989 between the Department of Tourism, Government of India and the United States National Park Service, a joint concept plan would be prepared for the development of the Agra Heritage Sites. The concept is to establish guidelines and policies for development and for providing visitor services and